

The Honorable Judge Robert J. Jonker
United States District Court
Western District of Michigan
685 Federal Bldg.
110 Michigan St NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Re: USA v. Boden et al Case # 1:21-cr-0040-RJJ-1

November 6th, 2021

Dear Chief Judge Jonker:

My name is Matthew Rochon and I am from Nova Scotia, Canada. I would like to share with you what I know about Chris Boden's character and how he has positively affected many people all over the world. I found out about Chris through The Geek Group/The National Science Institute YouTube videos nearly 10 years ago, and I could not get enough.

Chris has changed both my life and the lives of many others, individually and as communities. Personally, he has opened my eyes to science, engineering, and critical thinking, and he has empowered me to achieve things I never thought I could achieve. He has built Tesla Coils, refurbished old boats, run an actual school, fixed computers and given them away for free, and gave space for other nonprofits and community groups to use free of charge. His organization was called The Geek Group but renamed to The National Science Institute when the federal government invited them to the White House on two separate occasions and at one point said that they were going to classify the The Geek Group as a National Science Institute. This shows the deep impact they were having, not only on their community, but across the country.

Several years ago, a guy named Brian Timothy Haskin who had brain cancer started coming to the lab. He had heard about The Geek Group/The National Science Institute and talked to Chris about volunteering because he could not work with his treatment plan and wanted to do something meaningful; he just wanted to feel somewhat normal. He volunteered for some time in their computer lab and eventually found out his cancer had become terminal, he told Chris this and Chris made sure he knew that every one there had his back and that he could continue volunteering for as long as he wanted. Sadly, on August 4, 2016, after a courageous, lifelong battle with cancer, he passed away. Chris made sure to honor his memory, and Brain's legacy is still discussed even today.

Chris ran a "Computers for low-income family's program" where the The Geek Group/The National Science Institute would refurbish donated computers that companies and businesses were retiring and sell them at an extremely low cost, usually about \$50 with a monitor, keyboard and mouse to anybody who showed up, no questions asked. This helped people who could not afford a computer normally but needed a computer to look for work, to write resumes, to do

homework and so much more. The local high school in their community had an extremely low graduation rate, and Chris took it as his personal mission to ensure that any student that wanted would have access to technology to complete their degree.

Now, even after the lab closed, Chris is still working to build community. There is a large group of us who hang out online with Chris during his nightly live stream where we talk about what we did that day, what cool stuff we have been working on, and projects to help others. Our group has electrical engineers involved in keeping parts of the US power grid going, retired people who are older than time, veterans, electricians, people who work in the film industry, College/University professors, fishermen, mechanics, DJ's, salespeople, and people who make furniture as a hobby and could tell you anything you want to know about woodworking - it is wonderful to have so many knowledgeable people to rely on.

There is a member of our group, Tanner, his mother is Anti-Vax and Anti-Science and would not help him with seeing a doctor and getting treatment for his serious back/spine related health issues. He got kicked out and was living with a friend temporarily. When Chris found out about this, he knew we had to help him. We helped him with finding a job, a place to live, and a doctor.

One of our friends Sean was having some financial trouble and was not able to make his mortgage payment and worried about what may happen to his home. When Chris found out about this he got all of us together and within an hour we were able to help him out by collectively donating enough money so he could pay his mortgage, not get behind, not be stressed out and know that we care.

Chris also has his climbing certification and is trained in first aid. He is the kind of guy who keeps a "go bag" in his car suitable for every type of emergency. Whether it's pulling over to help someone change a flat tire when they don't know how or having whatever tool he needs wherever he is. He makes sure he will be able to help someone in need.

Your honor, The Geek Group/The National Science Institute was struggling and was losing roughly \$20k a month for years. A board member with an axe to grind teamed up with a former staff member who had recently been fired for theft, and hatched a plan to destroy Chris at all costs. It is my belief that they got the federal government to raid The Geek Group/The National Science Institute with over 50 agents from at least 4 agencies. The agents turned the place inside out, smashed open a safe to find that it was empty. They took over 15 years of educational footage backed up on hard drives, completely stopping all their educational video production which they still have not returned to this day.

The resulting publicity caused all the partnerships and sponsorships to evaporate instantly and 48 hours later, the lab sadly closed. This ended the last surviving large-scale makerspace. The group that hatched the plan to destroy Chris made a lot of noise and planned to start a new makerspace, but nothing came of it.

Your honor, Chris lost his entire life's work in the blink of an eye. His career, his company, and everything he has done for the past 25 years instantly went away.

He lost his staff, his reputation, and more than 90% of everything he owned. He sold all his research gear at scrap value or less. Much of it was simply given away to young people that were interested in science.

After moving out of the city he began making educational videos on YouTube, because he enjoys it. He does a nightly live show, because it's simple, pure, fun, and continues to promote education.

His job now is simple, "make cool stuff and put it on the internet". He has made more educational videos in the past year than he made in the previous decade. He's building a steel-hull tugboat project and he teaches people a lot of basic science and shop skills.

There is a quote made by Marc Porat from the film, *The Information Society*, that ran on PBS in 1979, it reads:

"If you look at society as simply the collective contribution of millions of human beings who carry in themselves certain power, influence, and emotion and every time you turn the switch off of one of those persons you dampen the globe. It's the fundamental question of whether this society is going to find a way to make itself as rich and as powerful, and if you will, as beautiful as potentially it can be."

I ask that you do not send Chris Boden to prison. For if you do, you will dampen the globe. I would also ask that you have his personal office computers and hard drives full of educational video footage released back to him so that he may share them with the world.

Respectfully,

Matt Rochon

██████████, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

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